



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: October 2, 2012

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**SUBJECT:** Information Report on the Federal Electoral Districts Proposal  
For The Province of Ontario

**PREPARED BY:** S. Huycke, Acting Deputy Clerk (x 4290)

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) THAT the information report entitled “Information Report on the Federal Electoral Districts Proposal For The Province of Ontario” be received; and,
- 2) THAT the Mayor be authorized to send a letter to the *Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Ontario* expressing Council’s opinion on the proposed Federal Electoral Boundaries; and further,
- 3) THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information in respect to *Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Ontario*’s proposal to adjust the boundaries of Ontario’s Federal electoral districts.

**BACKGROUND:**

The *Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Ontario* (the “*Commission*”) was established by proclamation on February 21, 2012, as required by the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, (R.S.C. 1995, c.E-3, as amended). The *Commission* is an independent body responsible for adjusting the boundaries of Ontario’s Federal Ridings after completion of the decennial census in 2011. On August 27, 2012, the *Commission* published its proposed electoral boundaries for the Province of Ontario. The proposal has significantly changed the boundaries of the federal ridings located within the City of Markham.

Currently, Markham residents are represented in the House of Commons by three (3) Members of Parliament, one from each of the ridings of *Markham-Unionville*, *Oak Ridges-Markham* and *Thornhill*. Of these electoral districts only *Markham-Unionville* is entirely within the municipal boundaries of the City. The riding of *Thornhill* covers an area of land almost equally split between the City of Markham and the City of Vaughan. The electoral district of *Oak Ridges-Markham* is a vast riding encompassing all of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, part of the Town of Richmond Hill, the majority of the Township of King, and a large portion of the City of Markham.

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## OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

### Provincial Quota & Increased Ontario Representation

In 2011, Parliament passed legislation to increase representation in the House of Commons from 308 to 338 seats. This same legislation increased Ontario's representation from the current 106 ridings to 121. Under the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act ("EBRA"), a population quota for electoral districts is calculated by dividing the provincial population total, as determined by the decennial census, by the number of seats assigned to the province. Ontario's provincial quota is **106,213**, calculated by dividing the 2011 census population of 12,851,821 by 121. Under the EBRA a riding population after redistribution can be no more than 25% less or more than the provincial quota. The *Commission* in its report has stated that the maximum upper limit for the population of a single Ontario riding is 132,766, and the lower limit is 79,660

### Provincial Quota and the City of Markham

According to the 2011 Census, Markham has a population of 301,709. Strictly speaking, Markham is entitled to 2.84 federal ridings, calculated by dividing the City Census population by the provincial quota ( $301,709 \div 106,213$ ). There is, however, a good argument that Markham should be assigned three (3) federal districts for the entire City none of which need cross the boundaries of neighbouring municipalities. With a provincial quota of  $106,213 \pm 25\%$ , Markham need only have a population of 318,639 to be entitled to 3 ridings exclusively within the City's boundaries. With a population of 301,709, each of three (3) ridings for Markham could have a population of 100,570, which is only 5.32% below the provincial quota.

### The Proposal

The *Commission* submitted its proposal for the redistribution of Ontario electoral districts on August 27, 2012. In the proposal, the *Commission* has indicated that their work has been to develop proposals to readjust the boundaries of the current electoral districts, and create:

"15 new electoral districts to conform to the number assigned to the province. The new electoral districts are located in the following areas: Brampton (2), Cambridge, Durham (2), Hamilton, **Markham (2)**...and York." (see page 9 of Attachment "A")

The proposal does appear to increase Markham's representation from the current three (3) ridings to five (5). However, a closer look at the proposals indicates that the representation is effectively increased by one (1) riding given that 2/3 of the proposed riding of *Vaughan-Thornhill* is within the boundaries of the City of Vaughan

## **Proposed Federal Electoral Districts**

What follows is a description of the proposed electoral districts for the City of Markham.

### **1. MARKHAM**

The proposed riding of *Markham* is bounded by Hwy 7 to the north, Steeles Avenue to the south, Hwy 404 to the west, and Hwy 48/Main St. Markham to the east. (see attached map "B"). It is comprised of a portion of the current electoral districts of *Markham-Unionville* and *Thornhill* (see map attachment "F" and "G"). It has a population of 109,559 which is 3.15% above the provincial quota.

### **2. MARKHAM-UNIONVILLE**

The proposed riding of *Markham-Unionville* is bounded by the municipal boundary of the City to the north, Hwy 7 to the South, Bayview Avenue to the West, and Markham Road to the East (see attached map "C"). It is comprised of a portion of the current electoral districts of *Markham-Unionville* and *Oak Ridges-Markham* (see map attachment "F" and "G"). It has a population of 106,084 which is 0.12% above the provincial quota.

### **3. MARKHAM-STOUFFVILLE**

The proposed riding of *Markham-Stouffville* is comprised of all of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, and that portion of the City of Markham that is bounded by the municipal boundary of the City to the north, Steeles Avenue to the South, Hwy 48/Main St. Markham to the West, and York-Durham Line to the East (see attached map "D"). It is comprised a portion of the current electoral districts of *Markham-Unionville* and *Oak Ridges-Markham* (see map attachment "F" and "G"). It has a population of 105,500 which is 0.67% below the provincial quota.

### **4. VAUGHAN-THORNHILL**

The proposed riding of *Vaughan-Thornhill* is comprised of part of the City of Vaughan. In Markham, the proposed electoral district is bounded by the municipal boundary of the City to the north and south, and Bayview Avenue to the East. (see attached map "E"). It is comprised of a portion of the current electoral districts of *Thornhill* and (see map attachment "H" and "F"). It has a population of 110,427 which is 3.97% above the provincial quota. It should be noted that approximately 2/3 of the area of this proposed district is entirely within the City of Vaughan.

## **Options for a Response to the Proposal**

The City, as a Community of Interest, could respond to the *Commission's* proposal. Staff recommend that a letter be sent to the *Commission* by the Mayor, on behalf of the city, expressing any concerns or issues, as determined by Council, with the proposed electoral

districts. Furthermore, the City could ask the *Commission* for the opportunity to present its concerns at one of the public meetings organized by the *Commission*.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)**

None

**HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS**

None

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

**BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**

none

**RECOMMENDED BY:**

10/10/2012

X 

Martha Pettit  
Acting City Clerk

11/10/2012

X 

Trinela Cane  
Commissioner, Corporate Services

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A – “Electoral Districts – Proposal for the Province of Ontario” published by the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Ontario.

Attachment B – Map of proposed electoral district of Markham

Attachment C – Map of proposed electoral district of Markham-Unionville

Attachment D – Map of proposed electoral district of Markham-Stouffville

Attachment E – Map of proposed electoral district of Vaughan-Thornhill

Attachment F – Map of current electoral district of Markham-Unionville

Attachment G – Map of current electoral district of Oak Ridges-Markham

Attachment H – Map of current electoral district of Thornhill